IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1, 2, 4 to 6, 18 to 20, 26, 27 and 31 to 33 without

prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and add new Claims 34 to 38, as shown below.

1. to 33. (Cancelled)

34. (New) A data input apparatus comprising:

first input means for inputting data;

second input means for inputting secret key information stored in an

external device;

generating means for generating a digital signature using said data and said

secret key information; and

outputting means for outputting said digital signature to said external

device.

35. (New) An apparatus according to claim 34, wherein said first input

means compresses said data.

36. (New) A data input method comprising:

inputting data via a first input means;

inputting secret key information from an external device via a second input

means, wherein said external device stores said secret key information;

generating a digital signature using said data and said secret key information; and

outputting said digital signature to said external device.

37. (New) Computer-executable program code stored on a computer readable medium, said computer-executable program code for use in inputting data in a computer system, the computer-executable program code comprising:

code to input data via a first input means;

code to input secret key information from an external device via a second input means, wherein said external device stores said secret key information;

code to generate a digital signature using said data and said secret key information; and

code to output said digital signature to said external device.

38. (New) A computer-readable memory medium in which computer-executable process steps are stored, the process steps for inputting data, wherein the process steps comprise:

a first inputting step for inputting data via a first input means;

a second inputting step for inputting secret key information from an external device via a second input means, wherein said external device stores said secret key information;

a generating step for generating a digital signature using said data and said secret key

information; and

an outputting step for outputting said digital signature to said external

device.